

CLAIMS

1. A method in which search items returned in response to a present user's present search request are prioritized according to an algorithm which assigns greater weight to interest indications by relatively similar users making relatively similar search requests
5 than to interest indications by relatively dissimilar users and than to interest indications making relatively dissimilar search requests.

2. A method as recited in Claim 1 comprising the steps of:
receiving a search request from a user;
assigning said user to a community;
assigning said search request to a search query;
5 submitting said query so as to yield a set of response items; and
prioritizing said response items as a function of prior search requests by said community.

3. A method as recited in Claim 2 further comprising tracking indications of interest by said user in individual ones of said response items and storing the results of said tracking on a per user and/or per-community basis.

4. A method as recited in Claim 3 further comprising a step of using said results in prioritizing items collected in response to subsequent search requests by other users assigned to said community.

5. A method as recited in Claim 3 wherein, all else being equal, interest indications associated with a community are given greater weight than other interest indications by the parent of said community.

6. A method as recited in Claim 3 wherein said user is assigned to a community in part as a function of said indications of interest.

7. A method as recited in Claim 2 wherein said user is assigned to a community as a function of a selection of said community by said user.

8. A method as recited in Claim 2 wherein said user is assigned to a community as a function of a profile of said user existing before said search request is made.

9. A system comprising:

a search-request receiver for receiving a search request from a user;

a community assigner for assigning said user to a community;

5 a search-request parser for assigning said search request to a query;

a search engine for collecting search items in response to said query; and

10 a prioritizer for prioritizing said search items as a function of previous searches by said community.

10. A system as recited in Claim 9 further comprising a tracker for tracking indications of interest by a user in search items collected in response to said search request from said user, said prioritizer using said indications of interest to determine said
5 function for future queries.

11. A system as recited in Claim 10 wherein said community assigner assigns said user to a community for said future search requests at least in part as a function of said indications of interest.

12. A database comprising:
a key field identifying hit counts;
a second field indicating a values for respective hit counts;
a query context field indicating query contexts for respective hit
5 counts; and
a user and/or a community field indicating respective users
and/or communities associated with said hit counts.

13. A database as recited in Claim 12 further comprising a
decay field for indicating times associated with said hit counts.

14. A database as recited in Claim 12 further comprising of a
period update system to update the community record counts from
the user record counts.